ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I state with pride that the present work owes much to my guide Prof. Dr. N. Balakrishnan Nair, B.Sc. (Hons.), M.A., Ph.D., D.Sc., F.Z.S., F.Z.S.I., F.A.Sc., F.N.A., F.N.A.Sc., Professor of Marine Biology and Fisheries, Chairman, State Committee on Science, Technology and Environment, Government of Kerala. Words are just insufficient to express my deep sense of gratitude towards him. If not for his keen interest, constant encouragement, unfailing guidance, helpful attitude and criticism during the entire course of work, my work could not have been completed.

I shall be failing in my duties if I do not mention the name of Dr. P. Natarajan, Head, Department of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries, University of Kerala, for providing facilities for this work.

I am grateful to Dr. L.N. Santhakumaran, Scientist, S.E., Wood biodeterioration division (Marine), C/o NIO, Goa, for the encouragement in this work and for the generous gift of publications.

My heartfelt thanks are also extended to Mr. N.K. Balasubramanian, Reader, Department of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries, University of Kerala, for the help rendered in statistical interpretation of the data.

I owe a great deal to Mr. T.L. John, Artist-photographer, Department of Aquatic Biology & Fisheries, for his help in preparing the photographic plates.

I express my deep sense of gratitude to all staff members and colleagues of this department, who in their own way, have, encouraged me to complete this work. Help and encouragement received from Dr. A. Chandran, Dr. K. Premkumar, Mr. M. Balakrishnan and Mr. P.M. Oommen are specially recorded.

Thanks are also due to Mrs. N. Rajamani, Office Supdt., Dept. of Aquatic Biology, for all the help rendered in typing the manuscript.

I am indebted to the U.G.C. for granting me the Teacher Fellowship under FIP and the Management and Principal of the M.S.M. College, Kayamkulam for sanctioning study leave.

Last but most important, I thank my parents, siblings and friends, who showed great interest in my work and stood by my side giving me moral support and encouragement throughout the entire course of this work.